

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BRASIL 06380 01 OF 02 021155Z

51

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 PC-04 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-15 DRC-01 /152 W

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R 021015Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9885

INFO AMCONSUL RECIFE

AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BRASILIA 6380

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT BR

SUBJECT: CANCELLATION OF MDB CONVENTION TV COVERAGE

REF: BRASILIA 6205

1. THE EMBASSY HAS ATTEMPTED TO RECONSTRUCT THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE CANCELLATION OF TV COVERAGE OF MDB PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE ULYSSES GUIMARAES' SPEECH AT THE CONVENTION OF SEPTEMBER 22. OUR PURPOSE HAS BEEN TO DETERMINE (A) WHETHER IT WAS THE "SYSTEM" REACTING NORMALLY WHICH CAUSED THE TV COVERAGE TO BE CANCELLED, OR (B) WHETHER THERE WAS A CONSCIOUS POSITION ASSUMED WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT WHICH LED TO THE EXERTION OF PRESSURE ON THE MEDIA IN ORDER TO BRING ABOUT THE CANCELLATION AND (C) TO ATTEMPT TO ASSESS THE POTENTIAL EFFECTS ON THE MDB'S DECISION ON WHETHER OR NOT TO WITHDRAW THEIR CANDIDATES FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.

2. OF PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE IS THE FACT THAT THE MDB SENT AN EMISSARY TO SPEAK TO LEITAO DE ABREU, CHIEF OF THE CIVIL HOUSEHOLD, IN ORDER TO SHOW HIM GUIMARAES' AND BARBOSA

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PAGE 02 BRASIL 06380 01 OF 02 021155Z

LIMA SOBRINHO'S SPEECHES AND TO ENLIST HIS ASSISTANCE IN

ARRANGING FOR THE TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT OF THE AGENCIA NACIONAL (A GOVERNMENT ENTERPRISE WHICH PROVIDES FOR NATIONWIDE TV HOOKUPS) TO BE USED AT THE CONVENTION. ACCORDING TO REPORTS, LEITAO DE ABREU AGREED TO LIVE TV COVERAGE OF THE SPEECHES. LEITAO DE ABREU'S DECISION WAS HAILED AS AN EXAMPLE OF FAIRNESS ON THE PART OF THE GOB TOWARD THE MDB IN MOST OF THE BRAZILIAN PRESS. ANOTHER EMISSARY WAS SENT TO THE TV NETWORKS TO PLEAD FOR COVERAGE. ON EARLY SATURDAY MORNING, THE AGENCIA NACIONAL DISTRIBUTED A NOTE ON THE "SENDING OF THE MOBILE TV UNIT TO THE NATIONAL CONGRESS BUILDING WHERE THE TRANSMISSION WILL TAKE PLACE AND WHICH WILL OCCUR UNDER THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE BROADCASTERS AND WITHOUT THE OFFICIAL PARTICIPATION OF THE AGENCIA NACIONAL." WHETHER OR NOT AS A DIRECT RESULT OF THIS NOTE, THE MAJOR NETWORKS GAVE NO LIVE COVERAGE OF THE CONVENTION, ALTHOUGH TAPED EXCERPTS RECEIVED MODERATE PLAY. ON SUNDAY, THE ESTADO DE SAO PAULO PUBLISHED AN ARTICLE QUOTING THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE MDB AS HAVING BEEN INFORMED BY REPRESENTATIVES OF TELEVISION STATIONS IN GUANABARA THAT THE DIRECTORATES OF THE BRLBGJSBGVTI # HAD RECEIVED

"SUPERIOR ORDERS (WHICH)...PROHIBITED THE SHOWING OF THE TAPES OF THE SPEECHES."

3. EMBASSY QUERIES TO A NUMBER OF WELL-INFORMED SOURCES HAVE SATISFIED US THAT NO SUCH ORDERS WERE ISSUED. HOWEVER, IT BECAME CLEAR THAT A NUMBER OF TV DIRECTORS HAD QUERIED THEIR OWN SOURCES IN THE GOVERNMENT AT VARIOUS LEVELS PRIOR TO THE CONVENTION TO TEST THE WATERS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S POTENTIAL REACTION TO CONVENTION COVERAGE. REPORTEDLY THESE QUERIES WERE MADE TO THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE, THE FEDERAL POLICE CHIEF, THE FEDERAL POLICE CENSOR, AND TO THE MINISTER OF THE ARMY'S CHIEF OF CENSORSHIP POLICY. THE BASIC IMPRESSION THESE DIRECTORS RECEIVED WAS A DISTINCT LACK OF ENTUHUASISM FOR SUCH COVERAGE IF NOT OUTRIGHT DISCOURAGEMENT. ONCE THE AGENCIA NACIONAL'S NOTE WITH ITS IMPLICATION OF INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY ON THE PART OF THE BROADCASTERS WAS MADE KNOWN, TV GLOBO, WITH A HIGHLY CONSERVATIVE PRO-GOVERNMENT DIRECTORATE,

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PAGE 03 BRASIL 06380 01 OF 02 021155Z

DECIDED NOT TO CARRY THE CONVENTION LIVE. IN ADDITION, AN EMBASSY SOURCE ACTIVE IN CENSORSHIP AFFAIRS INFORMED THE PRESS ATTACHE THAT HE HAD PERSONALLY AND UNOFFICIALLY COUNSELED "A GLOBO DIRECTOR" TO CARRY ONLY EXCERPTS OF THE VIDEO TAPE. ONCE GLOBO, THE PRINCIPAL NETWORK, REFUSED TO CARRY THE COVERAGE, THE OTHER NETWORKS WERE QUICK TO FOLLOW SUIT.

4. THE QUESTION REMAINS WHETHER THE DISCOURAGEMENT PROCESS, WHILE IMPLEMENTED INDIRECTLY, WAS THE RESULT OF A DELIBERATE POLICY DECISION. A NUMBER OF TRADITIONAL POLITICIANS OF ARENA AS WELL AS OF THE MDB ARE CONVINCED THAT THE REFUSAL OF COVERAGE WAS A GOVERNMENT MACHINATION. THIS IS ALSO THE OPINION OF MOST NEWSPAPER AGENCY HEADS AND POLITICAL COLUMNISTS. ONE WELL-INFORMED POLITICIAN MADE A DIRECT ASSERTION TO THE EMBASSY THAT TV GLOBO HAD BEEN UNDER PRESSURE FROM "THE SYSTEM" NOT TO BROADCAST GUIMARAES' SPEECH WELL IN ADVANCE OF THE CONVENTION. ACCORDING TO THE SOURCE, THE MOTTO OF THE SYSTEM IS "MELHOR PREVENIR DO QUE REMEDIAR" (AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION IS WORTH A POUND OF CURE). ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE HAVE BEEN PRIVATE DENIALS OF THIS FROM EMBASSY SOURCES IN THE SNI, THE MILITARY AND SOME OF THE MEDIA, I.E., TV-GLOBO, DIARIOS ASSOCIADOS.

5. AS DESCRIBED IN REFTEL, THE MDB AUTENTICOS HAVE BEEN PRESSING FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF THEIR PARTY'S CANDIDATES UNLESS ACCESS TO THE ELECTRONIC MEDIA WAS ASSURED. THE SUPREME ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL HAS BEEN ASKED FOR A RULING ON SECTION 250 OF THE ELECTORAL LAW WHICH PROVIDES FOR SUCH ACCESS. HOWEVER, THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ARENA HAS INFORMED THE EMBASSY THAT SUCH A PROVISION HAS BEEN INTERPRETED AS APPLYING ONLY TO DIRECT ELECTIONS.

6. THUS THE WITHDRAWAL OF TV COVERAGE AT THE LAST MOMENT SEEMINGLY PLAYED INTO THE AUTENTICOS' HANDS. WITH THE CURRENT TEMPER OF THE MDB RANK AND FILE A WITHDRAWAL OF THE CANDIDATE WOULD SEEM TO BE INDICATED. HOWEVER, A NUMBER OF FACTORS ALMOST INSURE THE MDB'S PARTICIPATION IN THE ELECTION:

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PAGE 04 BRASIL 06380 01 OF 02 021155Z

NOTE BY OC/T: #AS RECEIVED. WILL BE SERVICED UPON REQUEST.

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PAGE 01 BRASIL 06380 02 OF 02 021536Z

51

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BRASILIA 6380

(A) THE RESOLUTION INTRODUCED BY SENATOR NELSON CARNEIRO AT THE CONVENTION PROVIDES FOR A SUBSEQUENT CONVENTION TO BE CALLED TO DECIDE THE WITHDRAWAL ISSUE. THIS MOVE WILL PROVIDE FOR A COOLING OFF PERIOD ALLOWING MODERATES TO RESIST THE PRESSURE OF AUTENTICO HOTHEADS.

(B) SOME MEMBERS OF THE MDB LEADERSHIP ARE ACTUALLY RATHER PLEASED AT THE FUROR CAUSED BY THE TELEVISION CELLATION AND THE SYVMPATHY THEY GAINED. THEY FEEL THAT EVENTS AROUSED MUCH MORE INTEREST IN THE SPEECH THAN WOULD ORDINARILY HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE IF THE TELEVISION COVERAGE HAD BEEN PERMITTED.

(C) THE MDB MODERATES ARE COMMITTED TO A CAMPAIGN AT ALMOST ANY PRICE. THEY SIMPLY WILL NOT RESIST AN OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT THEIR CASE TO THE PUBLIC NO MATTER WHAT THE OBSTACLES. THE AUTENTICOS ARE NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO MAKE THEIR WILL PREVAIL.

(D) A NEWSMAN CLOSE TO BARBOSA LIMA SOBRINHO (WHOSE LETTER REPORTED REFTEL SEEMINGLY PUT HIM IN THE AUTENTICO CAMP ON THIS ISSUE) STATED THAT THE VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE HAS HAD HIS FIRST TASTE OF POLITICAL LIFE, IS IMMENSELY FLATTERED BY THE ATTENTION HE DRAWS WHEN HE APPEARS IN PUBLIC, IS ENJOYING HIMSELF HUGELY AND WILL CAMPAIGN UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.

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PAGE 02 BRASIL 06380 02 OF 02 021536Z

(E) ANOTHER CONTRIBUTING DEVELOPMENT IS A NEW INITIATIVE ON THE PART OF THE ARENA CANDIDATE GENERAL ERNESTO GEISEL. LAST WEEK HE BEGAN RECEIVING A NUMBER OF TRADITIONAL ARENA POLITICANS FOR PRIVATE TALKS WHICH WERE NEVERTHELESS WELL PUBLICIZED. SO FAR HE HAS SEEN DEPUTY HERBERT LEVY OF SAO PAULO, SENATOR CARLOS LINDENBERG OF ESPIRITO SANTO, SENATOR NEY BRAGA OF PARANA, SENATOR JOSE SARNEY OF MARANHAO AND DEPUTY FARIA

LIMA OF SAO PAULO. GEISEL'S ACTIONS HAVE TITILLATED
THE CONGRESS WHICH SENSES IN THESE MEETINGS THE BEGINNINGS
OF A HOPED FOR NEW ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CONGRESS. WHERE
MEDICI WAS NOTORIOUSLY
CONTEMPTUOUS OF AND UNCOMFORTABLE
WITH POLITICIANS THERE HAS BEEN AN ANTICIPATION THAT
GEISEL WOULD INITIATE A DIALOGUE WITH THE PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVES. HOPES THAT WERE CRUSHED WHEN TV COVERAGE
WAS WITHDRAWN ARE BEGINNING TO REVIVE. EVEN IF GEISEL'S
MOVE WAS
NOT DESIGNED AS A CONCILIATORY COUNTERMEASURE
IT COULD NOT HAVE COME AT A BETTER TIME.
CRIMMINS

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